

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 10, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Republican Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

As Congress negotiates end-of-the-year appropriations legislation, we write to bring to your attention the urgent need to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Communities (SRS) program, which is vital to our rural counties which have a large amount of federal, non-taxable, lands. We urge you to reauthorize this program in any end-of-the-year package to ensure our rural counties have the financial stability to properly plan for their area's critical services and needs.

In the past, these counties principally relied on a revenue sharing system from timber harvesting on federal lands to help secure necessary funding for rural communities; however, a variety of reasons led to a dramatic decrease in timber revenue which has adversely affected forest counties in 41 states.

As you know, in response to the drastic reduction in county revenue, Congress passed the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act in 2000. This important legislation stabilized a key funding stream for counties to invest in schools, law enforcement, transportation infrastructure, and other critical services. Since federal public lands are locked away from economic development, these communities operate under tight budgets—and the reliability of the SRS program allows local officials to accurately plan for their constituent needs.

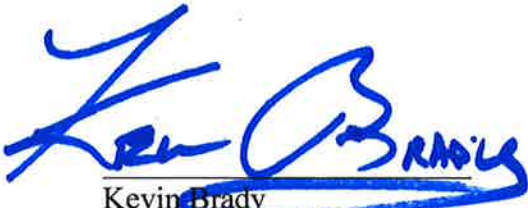
Unfortunately, this program has expired, and counties received their last payment earlier this year. Unless Congress acts, forest counties will be forced to revert back to the outdated revenue sharing agreement that originated in 1908. Under that scenario, funding that our counties and schools rely on would nearly disappear.

Our rural communities are an integral part of America, and it is imperative that Congress uphold its long-time commitment to these areas and ensure they do not suffer financial consequences from federal inaction. As you work to finalize spending legislation, we request reauthorizing this program for at least two years until a permanent solution can be identified.

We appreciate the continued leadership and are thankful for your consideration of this vital program. If you have any questions regarding this item, please do not hesitate to contact us or our respective legislative staff: Preston Howey (Brady), at [Preston.Howey@mail.house.gov](mailto:Preston.Howey@mail.house.gov), or Kris Pratt (DeFazio) at [kris.pratt@mail.house.gov](mailto:kris.pratt@mail.house.gov).

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter on which rural constituents rely.


Sincerely,


  
Kevin Brady  
Member of Congress

  
Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress

  
Liz Cheney  
Member of Congress

  
Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress

  
Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress

  
Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress

  
Brian Babin, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress

  
Don Young  
Member of Congress

  
Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress

  
Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress




Greg Walden  
Member of Congress



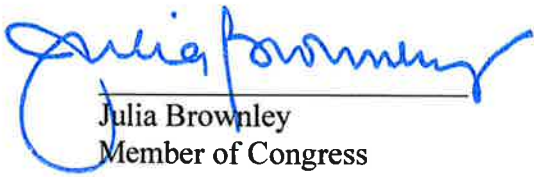
David Schweikert  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



Will Hurd  
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



Greg Gianforte  
Member of Congress